

*For Prosperity of the Christian Church in the latter
Ages of Time represented and improved.*

IN A
S E R M O N
P R E A C H E D 8.

Wednesday JUNE 17, 1747;

A T T H E

Rev'd Mr. BRADBURY's *Meeting-
Place, in New-Court, near Lincolns-
Inn-Fields,*

At a Monthly Exercise of *P R A Y E R.*

By *THOMAS GIBBONS.*

Published at the Request of the Ministers
who heard it.

*Thy Kingdom come! Thy Will be done in Earth as
it is in Heaven!*



L O N D O N:

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

TH E following Sermon, as the Title-page has already informed the Reader, was preached upon a monthly Exercise of Prayer and a Sermon upon Account of National Affairs, at the REV. Mr. BRADBURY'S *Meeting-place*.

When I delivered it, I can sincerely say, that I had not the most distant Thoughts of sending it abroad into the World ; but being desired to prepare it for the Press by the Ministers who heard it, I gave my Promise for its Publication.

The Subject of the Sermon is something peculiar, and I do not remember it has ever been largely and distinctly considered, in any of those excellent Discourses, which I have heard on the monthly Occasions.

But yet I think it is a very proper Topick to employ the Meditations of Ministers and People, and especially at those solemn Seasons, since it is a Theme in itself that is full of Delight to every Soul that is sincerely concerned for the Glories of GOD, and of the REDEEMER, and that feels a wide and warm Benevolence, (and certainly this is an Essential of a Christian) for the Welfare of his Fellow-Immortals.

And methinks, it is a most pleasurable Employment in these gloomy Days, when Wickedness and Misery extend themselves over the Face of

the Earth to that Degree, as that there is scarce a Nation in the World, but what is in a Manner over-run with the one, or the other, or both : I say, it is a most pleasurable Employment, in such evil Times, to erect ourselves by Faith, and Hope, look through, and look beyond the present gross and general Darkeness, and salute the Eye-lids of that Morning, when the Knowledge of the Lord, and every other Divine Grace to which Knowledge is introductive, shall cover the Earth as the Waters do the Seas.

That there will be such a prosperous State of the Church, is a Point with me beyond all Dispute, from the various, and, in my Opinion, invincible Authorities of Scripture ; and the ensuing Discourse, will, I believe, set the Matter beyond all reasonable Doubt : But that I may not omit, or fail fully to represent any substantial Arguments that Scripture furnishes upon the Occasion, I will add the two following Considerations to those that are mentioned in my Sermon.

The first Consideration is this ; that it is said of the Kingdom in my Text, *That it shall break in Pieces, and consume all other Kingdoms*. From this Description it is evident, that these glorious Days are upon the Rolls of Futurity ; for it is plain that there is no past Æra of which it may be said, that the Kingdom of Christ consumed, and broke in Pieces all other Kingdoms. Many Nations, and Nations too that occupy a vast Tract of our Globe, never have admitted the Gospel amongst them ; many Nations that have received the Gospel have contended against, and after a Time extinguished or miserably corrupted it, and are now choaked with the thick Fogs of the *Makometan* Delusion, or with the no less abominable Errors of *Papery* ; so that since there is a Promise concerning this Kingdom which the God of Heaven shall set up, that it shall *break*
in

in Pieces, and consume all other Kingdoms, and since there can be no Time assigned in which this Promise was accomplished, the Inference results, that this happy Period is reserved as one of the Births, and Felicities of future Days.

I would add further, that it appears that there shall be such a prosperous State of the Church, from a Portion of Scripture, which, as it is something dark, and difficult, may not seem to every Reader to carry such a blessed Import in it. The Parts of Holy Writ I refer to, are the 36th, 37th, 38th and 39th Chapters of *Ezekiel*. In which Chapters, as a Person will observe that peruses them, there is a Series of comfortable Prophecies concerning *Israel*; and afterwards you will find in the 40th Chapter to the End of the Book, a lively and delightful Account of the Prosperity of *Israel*, in the Rebuilding their City and Temple after a most stately and magnificent Manner.

Whether by *Israel* throughout these Chapters the natural Posterity of *Jacob* be understood, or whether the general Church of God be comprehended, you will observe that such Things are said concerning *Israel*, as cannot as yet have obtained in the World. And the Particulars that taken together prove this, are such as follow; all of which are inserted into the Prophecy, and indeed compose it. The Reduction of *Israel* from their Captivity; the Reparation of their ruined dismantled State; the Fertility of their Country; the prodigious Number of their Inhabitants; the universal Overthrow, and Triumph over their Enemies; the Embodying of the scattered *Israelites*; the Prosperity of the Land under one King, called Chap. xxxvii. 24. by the Name of *David*, which Name undoubtedly points our Thoughts to Christ, of whom *David* was an eminent Type; and finally, the Promise of God, that he will
acknowledge

acknowledge them as his People, that they shall be taken afresh into Covenant with him, he having forgiven their Iniquities, and purged away all their Idolatries, and other Abominations. Now should *Israel* be taken in the literal Sense, as intending the Descendants of *Jacob*, it will be evident that this Prophecy waits for its Accomplishment, for there never has been so general a Return from Captivity as will answer the Description, *Ephraim* and *Judah* have not been united into one common Body, there has been no such Destruction of the Enemies of *Israel* as will verify the Prediction, there has been no such City erected, and no such Temple built, as suit with the prophetic Draughts of them; and the *Israelites* have not, as a People, acknowledged Christ as their King.

Or if by *Israel* we understand the Christian Church, consisting of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, we shall be as greatly puzzled to make the Prophecies, and any Events that as yet have had a Place in the History of the Christian Church correspond together; for in what Age of Time was there so compleat a Victory over the Church's Enemies? When was it that the Church was in such a peaceful, and united State as the Prophet describes? And when was it that Religion flourished with that wide Success which is declared in the Prophecy? Can you mark the Time when so much as one of these Felicities was known in the Church of Christ? And yet the Prophet speaks of all these Felicities combining together, and at one particular Period, supporting and adorning the Church: And I may add, that both the Chapters in *Ezekiel*, and the Passages in the *Revelations*, which it is probable respect the same Time, speak of a Period of universal Holiness and Happiness in the Church of God, of so long a Duration, as to make it still more difficult to match
any

any Portion of past Time with the Prophecies upon Sacred Record.

From all which, I conclude, that the Prophet *Ezekiel* had in his Eye some Ages that were more distant than our own, and that this Prosperity, and these overspreading Glories of Christianity lie still in the Bosom of Futurity for the People of God.

I have one Thing more to add before I conclude my Preface, and that is, that I have industriously avoided any Enquiries about the Reign of Christ in his own Person for a thousand Years upon Earth; though I have faithfully represented, according to the best of my Knowledge, the Sense of Scripture, and have not spared the Quotation of the most full and forcible Expressions that may appear to lay a Foundation for such an Opinion. But however, as the Reader will unavoidably, in the Perusal of my Sermon, have some Thoughts rising upon, and it may be perplexing his Mind, as to this Subject, I shall leave with him what that incomparable Writer the late Rev. Mr. JOHN HOWE, speaks upon this Point, and to what he speaks, I think all that I have offered is reconcileable.

“ For my own Part, says he, * I will not assert
 “ any of these following Things. Either (1.) That
 “ that thousand Years doth precisely, and punct-
 “ tually mean such a limited Interval of Time;
 “ however more probable it may seem that it doth
 “ so, and though it be confessed to do so by them
 “ that would have these Things to be past. Nor
 “ (2.) That Christ shall personally appear, as some
 “ are bold to assert, at the Battle of *Armageddon*;
 “ and that he shall personally reign afterwards upon
 “ the Earth for a thousand Years. Nor, (3.) That
 “ there will be any Resurrection, before that Time

* See a Posthumous Volume of this Writer's, entituled,
Sermons on the prosperous State of the Christian Church, &c. p. 36.

“ do

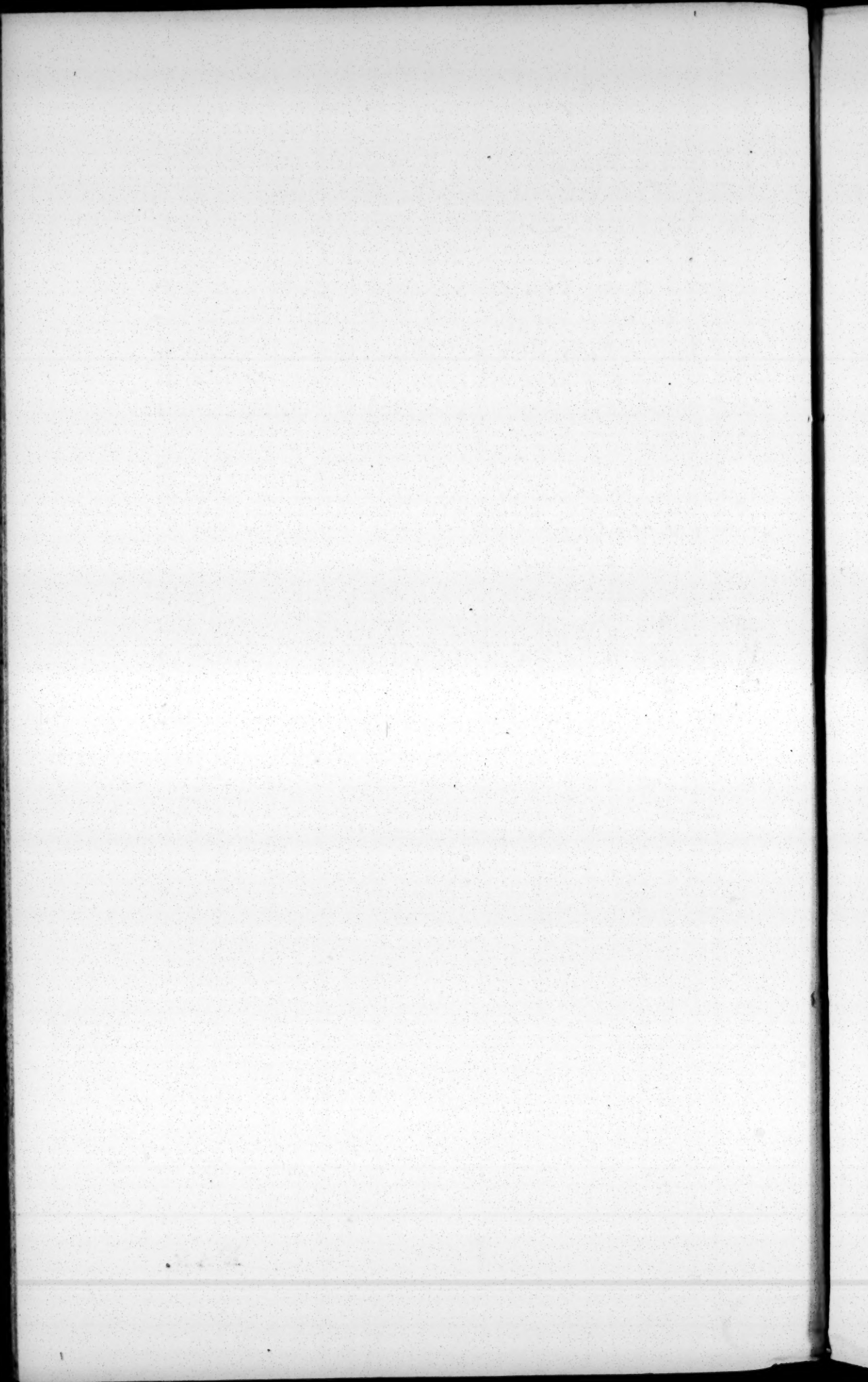
“ do commence, of the Bodies of departed Saints.
 “ Nor, (4) That the Happinefs of that Time fhall
 “ confift in fensual Enjoyments, which was the
 “ Conceit of *Cerintbus* and his Followers ; and
 “ which caufed the *Millenaries* to pafs under the
 “ Name of fo odious a Sect of old, by thofe who
 “ had taken notice of them, *Epiphanius*, and *Auftin*
 “ after him, and others : For they reckoned the
 “ Felicity of thofe Times fhould very much confift
 “ in a voluptuous Life, that Perfons fhould have
 “ every Thing to the Full that fhould be grateful
 “ to their Sense, all Opportunity to indulge Ap-
 “ petite, and the like. And leaft of all, (5.) That
 “ in this State of Things, the Saints, as fuch, fhall
 “ have any Power or Right given them in the
 “ Properties of other Men ; or that there fhall be
 “ a Difturbing, and Overturning of Ranks and
 “ Orders in civil Societies. I don’t think that *any* of
 “ thefe things are confidently to be afferted ; and for
 “ the two *laft*, they carry no other Face than of
 “ Things to be abhorred and detefted. But I conceive
 “ that *Thoufand Years* to intend a very long and
 “ confiderable Interval or Tract of Time, wherein
 “ the State and Condition of the Church fhall be
 “ peaceful, and ferene, and happy ; but efpeci-
 “ ally by a large Communication of the Holy
 “ Ghoft, that fhall make Men have very little
 “ Mind to this World, and very little feek fuch a
 “ Thing as ferving fecular Interests, and pleafing
 “ and gratifying their Senses, and fensual Inclina-
 “ tions.” So far that eminent Author.

As to the Sermon, I have taken fome Liberties
 with it, both in retrenching it in fome Places, and
 in enlarging it in others, as they will perceive, who
 have already heard it. And I queftion not, but a
 judicious Reader will fee there is a Neceffity of
 making ftill greater Alterations in it ; but however,

I hope the Sincerity of my Aim (and I trust my Profession of Sincerity will not be discredited) which is the Consolation of Christians, will atone for whatever Errors of smaller Consequence may be discovered in the Discourse. And I encourage myself from the Desires of my Brethren, I should rather say Fathers, that I would print the Sermon, that what was acceptable from the Pulpit, will be at least pardonable, and in some Degree beneficial from the Press.

May but this Discourse be the Means, under the Influence of Divine Grace, of conveying only so much as one Gleam of that Day, when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise and shine over his Churches with spiritual and universal Light, Life and Joy, and I shall ever after reflect with Pleasure on the Publication of it, and, I trust, be ready to ascribe to the great Head of the Church the Thanks and Glory of being an Instrument, though but of the smallest Success, to his Cause and People.

T. G.



DAN. ii. 44.

And in the Days of these Kings shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the Kingdom shall not be left to other People, but it shall break in Pieces, and consume all these Kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

GOD has delivered by the Mouth of his holy Prophets and Apostles, many faithful Predictions relating to the State of the World, and the State of the Church he preserves in it in the latter Days. Thus we find upon sacred Record, Prophecies regarding the Circumstances of *Jews* and *Papists*, which, though written seventeen hundred Years ago, or more, have their exact Fulfilment in our Times, and they afford to the People of God a strong Basis for their Faith, and an invincible Shield against the Attacks of Infidels, whose Camp and whose Triumphs have become so very numerous in our Age. Amongst the rest of the Prophecies which are written in the Word of God, that which we meet with in the Chapter of my Text is exceedingly remarkable, and when opened before you, I question not but it will be found a very substantial Support of our Faith and Comfort. NEBUCHADNEZZAR the King of BABYLON, BABYLON at that Time the Mistress of Nations, was visited by Heaven with a Dream; he awoke, but

forgot the Contents of it, which gave him great Anxiety and Distress. The Chaldeans, Soothsayers, and the rest of the wise Men of BABYLON were called in to recover the Dream, but declared the Recovery of it a Matter beyond the Compass of all human Power. Upon this the haughty and furious Tyrant commanded all the wise Men of BABYLON to be slain, and amongst the rest *Daniel* and his Companions were devoted and sought out for Destruction. *Daniel*, having heard the rash and bloody Edict of the King, undertakes to declare the Dream and its Interpretation, implores Mercy with his Companions from the God of Heaven to disclose the Secret, receives a gracious Answer in the Visions of the Night, and accordingly rehearses before the King his Dream, and makes known the Interpretation of it. *Thou, O King, ver. 31. sawest, and behold a great Image; this great Image, whose Brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the Form thereof was terrible.. This Image's Head was of fine Gold, his Breast and his Arms of Silver, his Belly and his Thighs of Brass, his Legs of Iron, his Feet Part of Iron, and Part of Clay. Thou sawest till that a Stone was cut out without Hands, which smote the Image upon his Feet that were of Iron and Clay, and brake them to Pieces: Then was, &c.* This was the Dream of NEBUCHADNEZZAR; and no Question but the King was immediately satisfied that *Daniel* had made a just Relation of it, since if only one correspondent Idea will often recover our Dreams, an exact Repetition of the Dream must certainly revive the vanished Images in the Mind of the Monarch. Each Part of this Dream had a distinct and instructive Meaning. The Image in general was a Type of human Government and Power. The Head of fine Gold represented the BABYLONISH Monarchy, *ver. 38. Thou art, says Daniel, this Head of Gold.* The BABYLONISH Monarchy had grown in NEBUCHADNEZZAR's Days, and this Growth

Growth was in great Measure owing to himself, to the most enormous Strength, and the highest Grandeur *, and therefore it might properly be shadowed forth by Gold, a most solid and precious Metal. *His Breast and his Arms were of Silver*: hereby the Kingdom of the MEDES and PERSIANS is figured out to us, which in the Reign of BELSHAZZAR the Grandson of NEBUCHADNEZZAR overcame under the victorious Arms of CYRUS the BABYLONISH Empire by the Reduction of the Capital, and the Slaughter of the King. *In that Night † was BELSHAZZAR the King of the CHALDEANS slain, and DARIUS the MEDIAN took the Kingdom, being threescore and two years old ‡.* The Breast and the Arms of the Image being of Silver, afforded a very fit Emblem of the Kingdom of the MEDES and PERSIANS, for though this Kingdom was extended farther than the BABYLONISH Empire, yet it was not of so considerable a Duration as that Monarchy, as Silver is not equal in Solidity and Strength to Gold §. It is added, *That the Belly and Thighs*

* Dr. Prideaux's Connect. Part I. p. 94.

† Dan. v. 30.

‡ As the Conquest of *Babylon* is well known to be the Work of CYRUS, and as the Scripture acquaints us, that DARIUS the MEDIAN took the Kingdom, it may not be amiss to inform my Reader from Dr. Prideaux's Connect. Part I. Page. 125. " That after the Death of BELSHAZZAR, DARIUS the MEDE " took the Kingdom. For CYRUS, as long as his Uncle lived " (who was this DARIUS) allowed him a joint Title with him in " the Empire, although it was all gained by his own Valour, and " out of Deference to him yielded him the first Place of Honour in it. But the whole Power of the Army, and the " chief Conduct of all Affairs being still in his Hand, he only " was looked upon as the supreme Governor of the Empire " he had erected."

§ The BABYLONIAN Monarchy, if we date its Beginning from NINUS, lasted about 700 Years. See Mr. Lowth in his Commentary on *Daniel*. Whereas, since it is certain that the PERSIAN Monarchy was overthrown by ALEXANDER, the PERSIAN Monarchy continued from the first Year of CYRUS to ALEXANDER'S Conquest

Thighs of the Image were of Brass. Hereby is typified the GRECIAN Kingdom, which with an irresistible Power overwhelmed the PERSIAN Empire under ALEXANDER THE GREAT, and became, in a Manner, Master of the then known and habitable World; so that *Daniel* might justly describe it, *ver. 39. As bearing Rule over all the Earth. The Legs of this Image were of Iron, and the Feet Part of Iron, and Part of Clay.* Herein we have a plain Symbol of the ROMAN Empire, in whose Gulph the GRECIAN Monarchy was swallowed up. The ROMAN Empire for many Years had the Strength, and invincible Firmness of Iron, *breaking in Pieces*, as the Interpretation of DANIEL represents, *and subduing all Things.* But afterwards being greatly degenerated by Luxury, weakened by the Irruptions of the GOTHS and VANDALS, and for the Sake of Peace, being composed in Part of those rough Barbarians*, being also divided into ten Kingdoms, which Division is plainly signified by the Toes of the Image, and being distracted and torn in Pieces by the Clashes

Conquest no longer than two hundred and nine Years. *Prideaux's Connect. Part I. Page 503.*

Mr. CALVIN takes a particular Method of accounting for the Inferiority of the PERSIAN to the BABYLONISH Monarchy, which I shall transcribe, and afterwards translate, for the Benefit of the *English* Reader.

“ Merito itaque DANIEL pronuntiat secundum regnum fore
 “ inferius primo, non quid vel dignitate, vel opibus et poten-
 “ tia præcelluerit NEBUCHADNEZZAR; sed quia mundus non ita
 “ degeneraverat, sicuti postea factum est. Nam quò sese lon-
 “ gius extendunt monarchiæ, eò etiam plus licentiæ in mundo
 “ grassatur; et usus hoc facillè docet. *Cal. in Loc.*

“ *Daniel* therefore, deservedly represents the second King-
 “ dom as inferior to the first, not because NEBUCHADNEZZAR
 “ excelled the second Kingdom in Dignity, Riches, and Power,
 “ but because the World in NEBUCHADNEZZAR's Time had
 “ not become so degenerate as it was afterwards. For the further
 “ Monarchies extend themselves the more licentious the
 “ World grows; and Experience easily confirms this Truth.”

* Sir *Isaac Newton* on the Prophecies of *Daniel.* Pag. 27.

of ecclesiastical and secular Power †, it may with the utmost Propriety be said by *Daniel*, as in Verses 41, and following, *That the Kingdom shall be divided, but there shall be in it the Strength of Iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the Iron mixed with miry Clay. And as the Toes of the Feet were Part of Iron, and Part of Clay; so the Kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas, thou sawest Iron mixed with miry Clay, they shall mingle themselves with the Seed of Men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as Iron is not mixed with Clay.* And this indeed, is the Case with the ROMAN Empire, in some Measure, in the present Age; for it has much of the Brittleness and Frailty of Clay mingled with its strong Remains of Iron, and the Nations that compose it are ever jarring with each other, and can no more be cemented together than Iron and Clay, should you attempt to knead them into the same Mass. All these Predictions therefore God has literally accomplished, and nothing can better answer and match together than the Prophecies and Events, than what God has declared, and what he has done. Here therefore is firm Encouragement for our Faith, that not one good Word shall fail of all that the Lord our God hath spoken, and that the Promise that still remains behind in this Prophecy to be accomplished, shall, when the Fullness of Time for its Birth is come, be compleatly fulfilled, *And that in the Days of these Kings the God of Heaven shall set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the Kingdom shall not be left to other People, but it shall break in Pieces, and consume all these Kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*

From the Words I shall raise and insist upon these two Observations.

† Mr. Lowth's Commentary on *Daniel*.

- I. That God will have a Kingdom in the World.
And,
- II. I shall make a particular Enquiry into the
Nature of this Kingdom.

I. I shall shew that God will have a Kingdom in the World. *And in the Days of these Kings shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom.* God has a Kingdom in the World already. *The Lord * reigns, let the Earth rejoice, let the Multitude of Isles be glad thereof.* And again, *The Lord sits upon the Flood; yea, the Lord sits King for ever †.* The Dominion of God, as that aspiring vain-glorious Worm *Nebuchadnezzar* was compelled to acknowledge, is ‡ *an everlasting Dominion, and his Kingdom is from Generation to Generation, and all the Inhabitants of the World are reputed as nothing; and he does according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and amongst the Inhabitants of the Earth: and none can stay his Hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?* In the darkest Nights, and most perilous Seasons of the Church, when the Enemies of it seem to be bearing all down before them with an uncontrollable Rage and Power, and § *the Daughter of Zion is left dismantled, defenceless, and solitary, as a Cottage in a Vineyard, or a Lodge in a Garden of Cucumbers,* even then it is that God sits supreme upon his Throne, and he holds and manages the Government of the World, though his Way is in the Whirlwind and the Storm, and the Clouds are the Dust of his Feet. The Rains may descend, and the Floods come, yet the Lord JEHOVAH abides the same Rock of everlasting Strength, and on this Rock is the Church established and secure. To

* Psal. xcvi. 1. † Psal. xxix. 10. ‡ Dan. iv. 34.
§ Isai. i. 8.

suppose God absent from this Earth, and to imagine that Kingdoms and States are tossed about, and shift from Owner to Owner without Design, or Permission from an almighty and superintending God, is a Supposition and Imagination greatly injurious to the Maker and Proprietor of the World, and will cast an incurable Melancholy and Sadness over the Souls, that for a Time are the Inhabitants of this Element of Change and Confusion. In some Sense therefore, God has a constant and unvariable Empire over the World, and there is not a Province of the large Universe he has made, nay, not the Dungeons of Hell itself, but what is under the Controul of the Divine Dominion; Hell is naked to Divine Omniscience, incensed by the Breath of Divine Justice, and its Chains are formed, and bound upon all the Prisoners there by Divine Power; but though there is this Kingdom of an Almighty God that is co-extended with the vast System of Beings, yet when it is said, *that in the Days of these Kings the God of Heaven shall set up a Kingdom*, there is something more than this universal Empire of Providence intended, and that is, that in the latter Periods of Time God will establish a spiritual Kingdom, a Kingdom that does not so much consist in restraining overruling and punishing the Rage and Rebellion of his Enemies, (in which Sense Devils themselves are under the Divine Government) but a Dominion that is founded in the Heart of God's free and loyal Subjects. It shall be a Dominion over Sons and Daughters, Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. A Dominion, to the Subjects of which God will be able to say, I am your God, and ye are my People. Such a Kingdom as this God has had here and there scattered over the Earth down from the original Apostacy; but hitherto it hath been contracted within narrow Bounds, and sometimes the People of God have been

no more than a few Handfuls of Corn amidst a large Heap of Chaff and Stubble; and even when Christ came, and the Gospel was preached comparatively with such wide and sovereign Success, yet many Nations had scarce a Ray of the Gospel broke in amongst them; but ere long the slumbering, not the dead, Promise in my Text shall be quickened and raised into full Life and Power, and God * *will give the Heathen for his Son's Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for his Possession.* † Then shall the Kingdoms of the World become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. The Kings of the Earth they have had each their Time of Dominion, and have long trampled down, and triumphed over God's Heritage, but at length the King of Heaven shall ‡ *gird his Sword on his Thigh, and in his Majesty ride prosperously, and the People shall fall under him.* He shall be § *King of Nations* in a more ample Sense than ever that Title was ascribed to any earthly Potentate. And the long Desires and Prayers of the Saints shall be turned into an universal Shout of Praises, and they shall with Joy behold || *that Christ's Kingdom is come, and that his Will is done on Earth as it is in Heaven.* But I am preventing, in some Measure, the Enlargements of my next Head, which leads me,

II. To make a particular Enquiry into the Nature of this Kingdom. And,

I. Jesus Christ shall be placed at the Head of this Kingdom; God will not immediately govern, but the Affairs of this Kingdom shall pass through the Head, Heart, and Hands of our great Redeemer, ** *I saw in the Night Visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the Clouds of Heaven,*

* Psal. ii. 8.

† Rev. xi. 15.

‡ Psal. xlv. 3, 4.

§ Gen. xiv. 1. || Mat. vi. 10. ** Dan. vii. 13, 14.

*and came to the Antient of Days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him Dominion and Glory, and a Kingdom that all People, and Nations, and Languages should serve him: His Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, which shall not pass away, and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. But they shall be Priests of God and of Christ, and shall * reign with him a thousand Years. As Christ is the Mediator through whom the Streams of all Divine Blessings descend to us, so he is the Sovereign in whose Hands the highest, and most absolute Authority is vested. He who once sowed in Sweats of Blood, and in whom the Ploughers made long their Furrows, shall reap from those Sweats and Furrows an abounding Harvest of Honour to himself, and Salvation for Souls. He who wore the Crown of Thorns in the Days of his Humiliation, a Crown twisted with Contempt and Sorrows, shall wear in his exalted State a Diadem of eternal Glory. He who grappled and sunk under the Cross, shall, e're long, display his triumphant Ensigns of Majesty and Power. He who poured out his Life for the Sins of the World, and in his Blood has founded his Title to the Dominion of it, shall then demonstrate the Virtue of his Title, and all those Passages that contain sublime and delightful Descriptions of the Government of Christ shall be accomplished to their last Bounds of Meaning. † Him hath God appointed to be both Lord and Christ. ‡ He is the Prince of the Kings of the Earth. § He hath on his Vesture, and on his Thigh a Name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. || Of the Increase of his Government and Peace, there shall be no End.*

2. The Holy Spirit shall be poured out in a most plentiful Effusion, to introduce the Kingdom, which

* Rev. xx. 6.
§ Rev. xix. 16.

† Act. ii. 36.
|| Isa. ix. 7.

‡ Rev. i. 5.

the God of Heaven shall set up ; such a Kingdom, as that of which we are speaking, shall not be raised by Might and Power, by any human or created Aids, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts. It is the appointed Work of that Spirit who proceeds from the Father, and who is the great Promise of the Son, though not so as to exclude the other two, to form the blessed Ingredients of this Kingdom in the Hearts of Men. He it is that convinces, converts, sanctifies and comforts, and the Kingdom which the God of Heaven sets up, will be nothing else than a copious and pleasant Participation of his Fruits. * *But the Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, and Temperance.* And the Erection of his Kingdom, which our Text regards, is plainly ascribed to the Operation and Grace of the Spirit in that Passage, *Neither will I hide my Face any more from them, for I have poured out my Spirit upon the House of Israel, saith the Lord God* †. Upon which Words Mr. Howe thus comments, “ I take it, that these Properties must “ be understood to belong unto this Communica- “ tion, the *Fulness* of it in Reference to each par- “ ticular Soul, or *intensively* considered ; and the “ *Universality* of it, so as that it shall extend unto “ vastly many, in Comparison of what it hath “ done. But neither of them to be understood in “ an absolute Sense.” To this Passage may be added another §. *Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high*, the Context shews that till this Time there shall be a preceding Decay of the Church, *and the Wilderness shall be a fruitful Field, and the fruitful Field be counted for a Forest ;*

* Gal. v. 22. † Ezek. xxix. 29. And if any doubt if this Place refers to these latter Days, let them consult the Preface to the Sermon.

§ Mai. xxxii. 14, 15.

that is, the Field counted fruitful before, shall in these blessed Days be esteemed as nothing better than a Forest. Then, my Friends, shall the Spirit unbind all the frozen Fetters of this wintry State, breathe over the Earth with his vital Influences, and the Vallies of Darknes and Death shall become Light and Life in the Lord.

** And the Wilderness and the solitary Place shall be glad for them ; and the Desert shall rejoyce, and blossom as a Rose : It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoyce even with Joy and Singing, the Glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the Excellency of Carmel and Sharon ; they shall see the Glory of the Lord, and the Excellency of our God.*

3. The Kingdom which the God of Heaven shall set up shall be a powerful Kingdom. It is said in the Verse of my Text, *that the Kingdom shall break in Pieces, and consume all other Kingdoms ;* and in the next Verse we are informed, *that the Stone that was cut out of the Mountain, without Hands, broke in Pieces the Iron, the Brass, the Clay, the Silver, and the Gold.* When he takes the Kingdom, whose Right the Kingdoms are, he shall overturn, and no Opposition, and Strength of Enemies shall be able to stand before him. Not all the *Paganish* Part of Mankind, (and oh ! what a vast Space do they occupy in the Earth) shall be able to resist the Kingdom of Christ ; and all the thick malignant Shades, which have so long drowned them in Ignorance, shall be pierced through, and dispersed when the Day-Spring from on high shall visit them. *Mahometan* Delusion, though that accursed Religion is built, and cemented together in Tyranny, and Blood, shall never be able to make Head against the victorious Empire of our Lord Jesus.

Jesus. Nor shall the old Idol at *Rome*, who has had more Lives sacrificed to him than ever the *Pagan Moloch* destroyed, be sufficient to withstand the Strength of Omnipotence ; but as he now fulfills the Prophecy that brands him as *the Man of Sin*, so he shall in that Day become in a publick Spectacle of Shame and Destruction, *the Son of Perdition*. The Refuges of Lies, the Pillars of Darknes, the Authorities of antient Custom, the Subtilties of *Jesuits*, and all the open Might and Fury of the Adherents to *Rome*, but Enemies to Christ, shall be broken in Pieces, and * *become like the Chaff of the Summer-threshing-Floors, that the Wind drives away, and there shall be no Place found for them. Who art thou, † Oh ! Mountain ? before ZERUBBABEL, or rather an infinitely greater Person than ZERUBBABEL, thou shalt become a Plain*. When Jesus rides forth in the triumphant Chariot of his Gospel, conquering and to conquer, Mountains shall sink, Vallies shall rise, crooked Places shall be made streight, rough Places plain, and all Flesh shall see (the Scales of Darknes shall fall from every Eye, and every Mound of Opposition shall be levelled in the Dust) all Flesh shall see the Salvation of God. In that Day Sinners shall be made the Triumphs of Grace, or they must expect to be Trophies of Vengeance. Either the Iron Rod shall break, and dash in Pieces, or the golden Sceptre shall sway. ‡ *The Lord at thy right Hand shall strike through Kings in the Days of his Wrath*. His Sin-revenging Arrows shall fly before him, and Kings shall be struck through, and attend the triumphal Wheels of this Divine Conqueror. || *He shall judge among the Heathen, he shall fill the Places with*

* Dan. ii. 35.

† Zech. iv. 7.

‡ Psal. cx. 5.

|| Psal. cx. 6.

with the dead Bodies, he shall wound the Heads over many Countries. * But his People shall be willing in the Day of his Power, in the Beauties of his Holiness : more than the Womb of the Morning shall Christ have for the Dew of his Youth. His People shall be all cloathed with the sparkling Beauties of Holiness, as Nobles that stand near their King, you know, wear the Ornaments of Jewels, Diamonds, and the like. And the Number of these Converts, *the Dew of Christ's Youth*, shall be more than the Womb of the Morning, more than the Dew-drops which in a Summer's Morning distil from the Heavens, impearl the Grass, and overspread the whole Face of the Ground. And we shall not wonder that Victory, irresistible Victory, should attend the Saviour, if we consider who he is, and what he has done. Is he not stiled, and is his Stile only a Sound, a Vanity? † *Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty GOD, and everlasting Father?* ‡ *Is he not GOD over all, blessed for evermore?* Did he not make the World, calling it forth first into Being, and then cloathing it with Light, Order and Beauty? Do not all things by him consist, and do not the Wheels of Nature and Providence roll upon his Hand? Did not Christ enter into the Heart of the Empire of Death, I mean the Grave, disarm, conquer, and destroy the Monster, and from his dreadful Prison open the Gates of Life for himself and People? Did not Christ spoil Principalities and Powers, bind the Old Serpent, and after the Manner of a Conqueror, make a Shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his Cross? And now does he not wear at his Girdle, the Keys of Death and the Grave? What Wonder therefore is it, since Christ has wrought so many wonderful Atchievements, that
Man,

* Psal. cx. 3.

† If. ix. 6.

‡ Rom. ix. 5.

Man, who dwells in Houses of Clay, who is the Creature of this Almighty God, and but a Worm before him, shall crouch and submit to the Lord of Glory? * *And I saw the Beast, and the Kings of the Earth, and their Armies gathered together to make War against him that sat upon the Throne, and against his Army. And the Beast was taken, and with him the false Prophet that wrought Miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the Mark of the Beast, and them that worshipped his Image.*

4. The Kingdom which the God of Heaven shall set up, shall be a peaceable Kingdom. The Kingdom of our Lord is said, † *not to be Meat and Drink, but Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.* Peace on Earth, and Goodwill towards Men was the Song that ushered our Lord into the World at his Incarnation, and it shall be resounded from one End of the Earth to the other when he sits upon the Throne, and takes the Government of Nations. ‡ *Men shall beat their Swords into Plow-shares, and their Spears into Pruning-Hooks ; Nation shall not lift up Sword against Nation, neither shall they learn War any more : || the Wolf also shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid ; and the Calf and the young Lion, and the Fatling together, and a little Child shall lead them. And the Cow and the Bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together, and the Lion shall eat Straw like the Ox. And the sucking Child shall play on the Hole of the Asp, and the weaned Child shall put his Hand on the Cockatrice's Den. They shall not hurt, nor destroy in all my Holy Mountain ; for the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Seas.* And to add

* Rev. xix. 19, 20. † Rom. xiv. 17. ‡ Is. ii. 4.
|| Is. xi. 6—9.

add no more in Proof that the Kingdom of Christ shall be a peaceable Kingdom, let it be considered that Peace is the Product of Holiness, and where Holiness has rooted itself into the Heart, the Peace of God that passes all Understanding, will fill the Mind, and cover it over with its precious and fragrant Shadow and Fruits. Now indeed, Contentions, Tumults and Bloodshed distract and waste Mankind. Ambition, Pride, Superstition and Cruelty rend the World asunder; and what Famines, Heaps of Death and Rivers of human and Christian Blood change the Globe, which was once our Paradise, into a Field of Carnage, an horrid Desolation, waste and miserable? Thousands and ten Thousands of Lives are accounted a cheap Sacrifice, a small Morfel to the boundless Pride, and insatiable Rage of the Tyrants of the Earth; and after these and perhaps greater Numbers have without a Pang of Remorse, or Tear of Pity, been butchered by the Sword, the Gun, or the wasteful Cannon, fresh Multitudes are compelled to fill up their Places of Danger and Destruction. These are the present dismal Scenes in the Earth! such is the Havock that the *French* Tyrant is now making in a Country not far from our Coasts; and from successive and endless Murders of Mankind, he hopes to obtain a successive and endless Train of Glories. Oh! who can restrain the fervent Groan, that God would hasten the Erection and Establishment of his peaceable Kingdom! Nor are there only these national Disorders, but there are also Divisions and Animosities amongst the Churches of Christ, which should be for Love and Union the Family of Heaven. What Contentions are there about Modes and Forms, this and that Circumstantial of Religion, and acknowledged to be such on both the disputing Sides, while the

Zeal for Godliness, like the Juices of the Body drawn out from the Vitals to nourish unnatural Tumours, languishes and dies. What Jealousies and Heart-Burnings often subsist, and are indulg'd between Members of the same Lord Jesus? And if we were never to come to the Altar, till we had been first reconciled to our offended Brother, I am afraid that we should not visit the Houses of God so frequently as we do. Brethren, the professed Children of the same God, and Father, and Joint-Heirs of the same Lord Jesus, fall out by the Way, and too little regard and practise the sacred Direction, to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace. But when God sets up his Kingdom there shall be a blessed Alteration for the better. *Ephraim* shall not vex *Judah*, nor shall *Judah* vex *Ephraim*. All will seek not their own, but the Things of others. This narrow Spirit shall be enlarged, this Self-Love which now, like the Streams of a Whirlpool, rolls back into itself the Streams it should pour forth for others, shall be widened into a social Sympathy and Communion with the Brethren, and, like a free flowing Fountain, run abroad in a thousand Rills of Refreshment and Joy for others. Prejudices, Grudgings, Lukewarmness and Censoriousness, when the Strength of Grace gains the Ascendant, shall, like *Sampson's* Cords, be broke asunder like a Thread, by those Flames of Love that shall then fill our Hearts, however miserably these Sins and Follies may at present confine, and contract our Spirits towards one another. Then shall there be open Hands, and open Hearts to Love, and clasp in inseparable Union with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity. Little Party-Names and Differences shall then be melted down, and swallowed up in the universal Love. A Christian then will be

be dear to his Brother as a Christian, because he is a Copy taken from the same Original, and a Disciple of the same Jesus, and not because he unites with him in the same Punctilios of Sentiment. The Arrows of bitter Words shall be broken in that blessed Day, and upon the Tongues of Saints shall be the Law of Kindness, and only the Dews of Honey shall drop from these Lips, which before were sometimes exasperated with Gall and Wormwood. Instead of magnifying, exposing, and exulting in the Falls of others, that Charity shall prevail which hopes all Things, and rejoices not in Iniquity ; and where we now sound the Trumpet of Reproach, we shall be rather for drawing over the Blemishes of our Fellow-Christians the Mantle of Love. Hasten, O Lord, the Birth of these Times ! thy Churches want them, thy Churches long for them ; at least let the Day break, and the Shadows flee away, and let the orient Beams visit us before the full Glories of this happy Period shall appear. And oh ! that thou would let us know in Part, though the full Harvest of these Blessings is reserved for an hereafter, * *How good, and how pleasant a Thing it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity. It is like the precious Ointment upon the Head, that ran down upon the Beard, even AARON'S Beard, that went down to the Skirts of his Garments. As the Dew of Hermon, and as the Dew that descended upon the Mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the Blessing, even Life for evermore.*

5. The Kingdom which the God of Heaven shall set up shall be an universal Kingdom. Of the vast Extent of this Kingdom, we have a strong Assurance in the Words of my Text, which acquaint us, *That it shall consume all these Kingdoms ;* not

* Ps. cxxxiii.

one or two Empires of the Earth only shall yield to this Kingdom, but all of them are to be dissolved in this Dominion. And there are many more express Passages. *And * it shall come to pass in the last Days, that the Mountain of the Lord's House* (here is an evident Reference to Mount Zion and the Temple built upon it) *shall be established above the Hills and all Nations shall flow unto it. And many People shall go, and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of JACOB, and he will teach us of his Ways, and we will walk in his Paths.* So again, *† Sing, O Barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with Child; for more are the Children of the Desolate, than the Children of the married Wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the Place of thy Tent, and let them stretch forth the Curtains of thine Habitations; spare not, lengthen thy Cords, and and strengthen thy Stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the right Hand, and on the Left; and thy Seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate Cities to be inhabited. And I may turn you farther to another Passage, ‡ Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold the Darknes shall cover the Earth, and gross Darknes the People; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his Glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy Light, and Kings to the Brightness of thy Rising. Lift up thine Eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee, thy Sons shall come from far, and thy Daughters shall be nursed at thy Side. Then thou shalt see and flow together, and thine Heart shall fear, and be enlarged, because the Abundance of the Sea shall be converted unto thee, the Forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. ——— Who are these*

* Isai. ii. 3. † Isai. liv. 1, 2, 3. ‡ Isai. lx. 1—8.

that fly as a Cloud, and as the Doves to their Windows? Fleeing home like a numerous Flock of Doves that, as a Cloud overshadow and darken the Heavens with their prodigious Numbers. To the same Purpose I might mention many more Proofs, but I think these are sufficient for our Point. In the Ages before Christ, the Gospel, that Dew of Heaven that refreshes and fructifies the Soul, was confined to this or that Family or Nation, and while their Fleeces were watered with heavenly Influences, the rest of the World was dry; and God speaks of *Israel* under the Notion of a Vineyard that was selected and separated from the wide Waste of the World, and appropriated as his own peculiar Heritage by spiritual Blessings and Privileges: But now many Nations are visited with, and there is no Bar in the Commission of Ministers, why all should not enjoy the Light of the Gospel. * *Go ye into all the World, says Christ to his Apostles, and preach the Gospel to every Creature.* But in this future Day, this Day when Christ shall set up his universal Kingdom, the Gospel will be diffused not only in its Light, but in its Power over the Earth. The poor benighted *Indians*, the stupid and almost brutal *Hottentots*, the *Lapland* Sorcerers, the Cannibals of *Africa* that riot, as it is said, on human Flesh and Blood, the blinded *Mahometans*, the superstitious and blood-thirsty *Papists*, and the perverse and obstinate *Jews*, and the rest of the Nations that are now the Realms of Darkness, and the Habitations of Cruelty, shall all acknowledge, and bow to the exalted Standard of the Redeemer. Does the natural Sun extend abroad his Rays over the Face of the World, and is his going forth from the End of the Heaven, and his Circuits to the Ends of it, and is there nothing

* Mark xvi. 15.

hid from the Heat thereof? This natural Sun is but a Type of the spiritual Sun, the Sun of Righteousness that shall arise upon the Nations with Healing under his Wings: Boundless as the Beams and Blessings of the first are spread, so boundless shall be the Beams and Blessings of the last. Hoariness and Infancy, Male and Female, Jew and Gentile shall all join in the *Hosanna*, Blessed is he that comes in the Name of the Lord. Now the Road of Heaven is not much frequented, it is narrow, and it is but a little trodden Path, but ere long it shall be an High-way, a Way of great Resort and Company, and instead of Tens shall be Thousands, and instead of Thousands shall be Millions, all enquiring the Way to *Zion*, with their Faces directed thither. The wandering Souls that found no Rest, but hovered hither and thither, in Hopes of finding, some sure Refuge from the Terrors and Distresses of Conscience, shall at last come home to the Ark of Salvation. *Satan* shall fall like Lightning from Heaven: His malignant Fires shall be shot against the Kingdom of Christ, but shall only blaze and die: His Sway has been long enough, and wide and far did he extend his Iron Sceptre, entrench and support himself in Darkness and Delusion, but at length the *Strong* shall be overcome and yield to the *Stronger*, the Lord God Almighty. The Flock of Christ is now a little Flock, though small as it is, it is not out of the Reach of his Promise, or his Protection, but the Day is coming, when the Limits of his Flock shall be in a manner co-extended with the Bounds of the World: There shall be one Fold, and one Shepherd. The Waters of Life, that only reached at first to the An-
cles *, then to the Knees, next to the Loins, and

* Ezek. xlvii. 2—8.

afterwards increased into a River that could not be passed over, shall go down into the Desert, and into the Sea, and extend their vital cheering and healing Virtues in an unbounded Course.

6. And lastly, The Kingdom which the God of Heaven shall set up, shall be an everlasting Kingdom. The Text says, *It shall never be destroyed; nor left to other People*; that is, no Kingdom shall rise up after it to overcome, and erase it, and it shall stand for ever. And to this Account agree other Descriptions that we meet with of the same glorious Event. † *Of the Incrense of his Government and Peace there shall be no End, upon the Throne of DAVID, and upon his Kingdom to order it, and establish it with Judgment and with Justice, from henceforth even for ever.* ‖ *Thou art a Priest*, says the Father to the Son, and if a Priest, unquestionably he is a King for ever. § *His Dominion is an everlasting Dominion which shall not pass away, and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.* One Kingdom of the World has yielded, Time after Time, to the overpowering Force of another; thus the EGYPTIAN Monarchy was swept away by the Power of the BABYLONIAN, the BABYLONIAN sunk into the Hands of the PERSIAN, the PERSIAN Empire was destroyed by the swift and irresistible Conquests of the GRECIAN, and the GRECIAN Monarchy was dissolved and lost in the Gulph of ROME, which Monarchy is still subsisting, though, as has been observed, with much Weakness, and jarring Confusion. But when the Time comes that Christ shall be proclaimed King of Nations, the Saints shall have this Assurance for their strong Consolation, that they have received a King-

† Isai. ix. 7. ‖ Psal. cx. 4. § Dan. vii. 14.

dom that shall never be moved * ; a Kingdom by which all human Power shall be dashed in Pieces ; a Kingdom against which not all the Gates, and Legions of Hell shall be able to prevail : And † *Whosoever shall fall on this Stone that was*

* Here I find it necessary for me to obviate an Objection that may seem to stand with great Force against the Universality and Perpetuity of the Kingdom which God shall erect in the World. And it may be said, that our Lord prophesies of a general Licentiousness and Stupidity in those Times, when he shall come to judge the World. Mat. xxiv. 34. *But as the Days of Noe were, so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the Days that were before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in Marriage, until the Day that Noe entered into the Ark, and knew not until the Flood came and took them all away: so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be.* And to corroborate this Objection it may be further added, that after the Expiration of the Thousand Years, we are told, Rev. xx. 7. *That Satan shall be loosed out of his Prison, and shall go out to deceive the Nations of the Earth, Gog, and MAGOG to gather them together to Battle, the Number of whom is as the Sand of the Sea.* Since this is the Case, it may be asked, how can we reconcile these, and such like Prophecies with the Opinion of an universal and everlasting Kingdom ? My Answer is, That it is not asserted, that this Kingdom shall ever in this World be universal at any Time, in such a Sense, as to comprehend every Individual ; nor is it affirmed, that the Kingdom shall be the same in Degree at all Times, but sometimes it may be diffused wider, and sometimes it may be circumscribed, speaking in Comparison, in a narrower Compass : And it may perhaps so come to pass, that, in the Times just preceding, and in the very Article of Christ's coming to Judgment, this Kingdom may not be so wide, and in so flourishing a State as what it has been in some former Periods, but yet there may be so many Believers in Christ, as to verify the promised Universality, and Perpetuity of his Kingdom, although there may be many Enemies to Christ, and his People. And methinks, whosoever considers that the Enemies of the Saints, Rev. xx. 9. *went up on the Breadth of the Earth, and compassed the Camp of the Saints about,* (a Camp denotes no small Number of Persons) and observes also, that the Day of Judgment is immediately spoken of, will easily conclude, that there will be a vast Multitude of Saints, as well as a vast Multitude of Sinners found in the Earth just before the second Appearance of Christ for the Judgment of the World.

† Matth. xxi. 44.

cut out of the Mountain without Hands shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall it shall grind him to Powder. The Powers of this Kingdom are not like those Powers by which earthly Kingdoms have been, and are supported, Swords, Spears, Armies, and the like, which can be, and often are destroyed by other Swords, Spears, and Armies, or in a little Time perish of themselves. The Weapons of this Kingdom are not carnal, but spiritual, and therefore mighty for the pulling down the strong Holds, not of Towers and Cities, but Sin and Satan. This Kingdom is a Kingdom of Holiness: 'Tis a Kingdom, the immediate Production of God himself: 'Tis a Kingdom, the Fruit of infinite Wisdom, the Charge of Almighty Power, the Superstructure of immutable Faithfulness, and the Delight and Darling of Divine Love: 'Tis a Kingdom after God's own Heart, and it wears the Stamp of his own Image. Other Kingdoms they crumble away by Luxury, Pride, and Contention, which are the general Fruits of a full and long Prosperity, and thus they sink beneath the Weight of their own Wealth and Grandeur, but nothing of this Kind can happen to this Kingdom of Divine Establishment, for the very Nature, the undecaying Vitals of it, are not Sin but Holiness, not Variance but Peace. Time, that with his wide-wasting Scythe rends up Empires from their Roots, has no Place for his Destruction here. Other Kingdoms stand upon rolling Sands, this Kingdom, like a Rock in the Midst of the Ocean, stands in the very Bosom of Eternity. But here it may be objected, how can it be that the Kingdom which God shall set up should be everlasting, since there will ere long be a Conflagration and Dissolution of the World? When there is no Place, no Seat for Empire, must not this Kingdom of Course vanish away? I answer, that it is granted that the Earth is now doom'd

to fiery Destruction, and that there is a Day of Execution appointed in the Secrets of the Divine Decrees : but notwithstanding the Kingdom of Christ shall be everlasting, and the Saints, the Subjects of this Dominion, shall only be transferred at the Dissolution of this visible Frame of Nature from one Region to another, and, when this mighty Scaffolding shall be taken down and committed to the Flames, the Children of this Kingdom shall be received into the House not made with Hands eternal in the Heavens. The Kingdom is the same as to its Head, Constitution and Subjects, though it may receive at most only a circumstantial Alteration, and that for the better ; and that this is a true Fact that Saints at the End of the World shall be only transplanted into another Colony, is evident from what the Apostle says ; * *For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first ; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air ; and so shall we be for ever with the Lord.* On Earth we have only the early Beginnings of this spiritual Kingdom ; its eternal Continuance is the Bliss of Heaven. † *And there shall be no more Curse ; but the Throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it, (that is, the new Jerusalem) and his Servants shall serve him, and they shall see his Face ; and his Name shall be in their Foreheads. And there shall be no Night there, and they need no Candle, neither Light of the Sun, for the Lord God gives them Light ; and they shall reign FOR EVER AND EVER. FOR EVER AND EVER,* astonishing Words ! with what a Weight of Glory are they loaded ! Let Myriads and Millions of
Years

Years be cast into one Scale, and Eternity poised against them in the other, and what are Myriads and Millions of Years in Comparison, but the Drop of the Bucket, and the small Dust of the Ballance. Eternity strikes all our Language dumb, Eternity swallows up all our Conceptions in its fathomless, boundless Abyfs! Time is but the Child of Eternity, the brittle and quick-dissolving Tie that unites the eternal Ages before to the eternal Ages behind. Human Empires are like the Shadows of Mountains that stretch themselves wide and far, but are vanished and passed away in a Moment, or empty Bubbles that foam up in the troubled Seas of the World, burst, and die. ALEXANDER'S wild Career of Glory was stopped at about thirty Years of Age, and he who had over-run, ravaged and enslav'd Nations, planned, and filled his Soul with vaster Schemes of Glory, felt the World's Limits too narrow for his boundless Ambition, and even dared to challenge Divine Honours, and trace his Origin from the Skies, was arrested by a sudden Disease, the Effect of a drunken Carousal, and died at *Babylon*; and so this glaring Meteor of Fame, that had so much astonished and terrified the World with its rapid and malignant Course, sunk down in the Silence and Darknes of Death for ever. But not such is the Kingdom of this rightful, unchangeable Monarch, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Eternity's countless Ages shall roll and roll on in long Successions, but not one Beam shall ever be faded in the Throne, nor one Star plucked out, or eclipsed in the Diadem of our exalted Redeemer. Holiness and Happiness are the Essentials of his Government, and they shall fill the Souls of all his admiring Saints, without Measure and without End; and Hell shall with impotent Malice hear the triumphant

phant and everlasting Challenge, * *Who shall separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?*

THE IMPROVEMENT.

1. If God will set up a Kingdom in the World, no Opposition shall defeat his Design: God has pledged his royal Word, that he will have a Kingdom, not of chained, reluctant Slaves, but voluntary Subjects. And shall God publish his Decree, and be controuled, and over-ruled by the Plots, or Power of his Enemies? Has not all that God has predicted concerning these several Kingdoms been exactly and compleatly verified, and has not Providence been a just and faithful Comment upon the Prophecies? Why then should we nourish the gloomy anguishing Thought, that the Enemies of God should be able to frustrate the Promise that yet remains unfulfilled, this great Promise to which the foregoing Events of Time point, and in which they shall all finally meet as in their Centre? It may be objected, “ that there
 “ may be no present Appearance of such a glorious
 “ Event: vast Empires of the World are immersed
 “ in the Darkness of PAGANISM; others are sunk
 “ in the MAHOMETAN Delusion, and the greater
 “ Part of the Residue of the Nations bow the
 “ Knee to the IDOL of ROME. The PROTESTANT
 “ Interest, it is farther added, is very low, many
 “ are its Enemies, and few are its Friends, and of
 “ these few some are only Friends in Name, and
 “ not in Heart, for Interest and not for Religion.
 “ The Ballance of EUROPE hangs very doubtful,
 “ or rather the Weight seems evidently to lie in
 “ the Scale of Tyranny, and the PROTESTANT
 Cause

* Rom. 8. 39.

“ Cause is threatned with universal Destruction, if
 “ God should not remarkably reveal himself for
 “ our Help. Instead of Affairs making towards
 “ this happy Revolution, when the Kingdoms of
 “ the World shall become the Kingdoms of the
 “ Lord, and of his Christ, the Bias seems to turn
 “ strong the other Way, and never was there a
 “ more violent Flood sent out of the Mouth of
 “ the Dragon, and his Emissaries than in the pre-
 “ sent Day.” Be the Case such : Still, still, my
 Friends, the Promise of God stands secure, and
 when his Enemies resist, and rebel to the utmost
 Heights of their Rage, and Extents of Power,
 yet * *he that sits in the Heavens shall laugh,*
the Lord shall have them in Derision. And at the
 lowest Ebb of Religion, and the most over-bearing
 Tide of Opposition to God and his Christ, it may
 be said, † *Why do the Heathens rage, and the Peo-*
ple imagine a vain Thing ? Christians, you do not
 enough consider in your Fears, and Dispondencies
 who your God is, and what an invincible Arm of
 Strength he has to hurl Confusion and Destruction
 upon your Enemies, and command Deliverance
 and Safety to his Friends. And this Power is not
 always lodged in its own silent Fulness in the
 Deity, whose Interest you are afraid will perish
 in the Earth, but it has been demonstrated and dis-
 played in a thousand Wonders of Mercy to his
 People. ‡ *Awake, awake, put on Strength, O Arm*
of the Lord ; awake as in the antient Days, in the
Generations of old. Art thou not it which hath
cut RAHAB, and wounded the Dragon. Art thou
not it which hath dried the Sea, the Waters of the
great Deep, that hath made the Depths of the Sea
a Way for the Ransomed to pass over ? We are
 too apt to reduce our Apprehensions of God to
 our own low Standard, and then looking round
 upon

* Ps. ii. 4.

† Ps. ii. 1.

‡ Is. li. 9, 10.

upon the vast and formidable Hosts that are gathered against his People, we are ready to sink into Dependancy, if not into Despair. But consider who has promised the Settlement of this powerful, peaceable, universal and everlasting Kingdom. Has not He promised, whose Power has no Rival, and whose Faithfulness has no Change? And therefore, when the appointed Hour is come for the Birth of the Promise, it will be found that no Conspiracies, and Powers of Enemies have been able to abortive the Divine Counsels. God has no where said, that before these glorious Days there shall not be a Growth and Strength of his Adversaries, and a Declension and Scarcity of his Friends; nay, he has given us Reason to think that his Enemies shall increase, and his Saints shall be oppressed and thinned before Christ takes to himself his great Power and Reign. Why then should we fear lest the Interest of Christ should expire in the World, from any present Appearances? As reasonably might you fear, that because it is sometimes Winter, when Storms, and Sleets, and Snows have stript the Earth of its Flowers and Fruits, suspended the Vigour, and bound up the Powers of Nature, that therefore there shall be no Return of the warm Gales, and verdant Beauties of the Spring: or that because the World is covered over at Night with the thick Shades of Darkeness, that therefore there shall be no Succession of the Dawn of the Morning, and the Beams of the rising Sun; nay, more reasonable would be such a Fear, than the Fear that such a blessed Day, as I have represented, shall never shine upon our World, for Heaven and Earth may and shall pass away, and with them all the Revolutions of Summer and Winter, Day and Night, but the Word of our God shall stand for ever. God has watched the Hour of the greatest Distress
and

and Extremity for his Interpositions of Power and Grace for his People, and hereby the Terrors of his Anger have flamed the more dreadfully against his Adversaries, and his Mercies have triumphed the more illustriously in the Favour of his Saints. * *When the Lord turned again the Captivity of ZION, we were like them that dream.* The Salvation was so unexpected and so great that it seemed, rather like the pleasant Images of a nightly Slumber, than the actual Performance of the Almighty Arm.

2. If Christ shall be placed at the Head of this Kingdom, what Honour shall hereby redound to him? Christ came down into our World, and veiled his Divinity under a Covering of our Clay, he obeyed the Law in the Place of Sinners, for them he was offered a bloody Sacrifice, and none but he who felt can conceive that Confluence, and Energy of Distress he endured, when his Body poured out its purple Sorrows from every bleeding Pore, when he was hung up as a Spectacle of Shame and Torment, when the amiable Face of his Father was eclipsed, and, as to its bright Manifestations, withdrawn from his Soul, when Justice poured in all her flaming Arrows of Sin-revenging Wrath, and when he bowed his Head, saying, † *It is finished*, and gave up the Ghost. And as the Humiliation of Christ was thus deep and bitter, so his Exaltation shall be as high and glorious. What an unconceivable Honour will it be to rule over a World of willing Subjects, to gather the Outcasts of *Israel*, and the Fulness of the *Gentiles*, and unite them together in one Sheepfold, over which He the Redeemer shall be the universal Bishop? His Titles of Glory shall in that Day be all made good, he shall be acknowledged King of Kings,
and

* Ps. cx xvi. 1.

† Joh. xix. 30.

and Lord of Lords, and the Father's Grant shall pass out of its promissory State into that of Accomplishment, * *Ask of me, and I shall give the Heavens for thine Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for thy Possession.*

3. Since Christ will be set at the Head of this Kingdom, great Pleasure will hence arise to his People. Will not such Thoughts as these transport the Minds of the People of God in that blessed Day, when this powerful, peaceable, universal, and everlasting Kingdom shall be founded in the World? “ That Saviour, that before the Foundation of the “ World entertained Thoughts of Love and Peace “ towards us, that Saviour that dignified one of “ these earthly Tabernacles with his indwelling “ Deity, that Saviour who fulfilled the Law in our “ Place, who was crucified and slain as a Sacrifice “ of Atonement, that Saviour who entered into, “ sanctified, and perfumed the Grave, broke all “ the Stings, and burst the Chains of Death for his “ People, that Saviour that ascended to Heaven to “ be the Forerunner, Advocate, and Intercessor for “ all his Chosen, Called, and Faithful, and in a “ Word, that Saviour whose infinite Love, and “ superabounding Merits are the Fountains of all “ our Blessings in Time, and our brighter Hopes “ in Eternity, this Saviour, and he only, shall be “ the Governor of this powerful, peaceable, and “ everlasting Kingdom. Where could there be “ one found through all the Myriads and Millions “ above, so fitted for, and so acceptable to us in “ this high Office as Jesus Christ? He is our “ Friend, our Brother, he has made us Heirs of “ God, and Joint-heirs with himself; *Hosanna* “ to him therefore as our Lord, and our God. “ The Title of his Dominion is founded in his “ Blood, and what a Pleasure is it to be drawn

* Psal. ii. 8.

“ to Obedience by the Bonds of infinite and everlasting Love?”

4. How great is the Power of the holy Spirit, who can thus wonderfully reform and change the World! And here suffer me to borrow my Enlargement from Mr. HOWE, who, after he had introduced a like Observation, speaks in the following noble Manner. * “ Look upon that wretched
 “ State of Things wherein the Christian Church is,
 “ and wherein we may well expect it farther to be,
 “ and in a deeper Degree; if we think, that however, when the Spirit is poured out, all is well,
 “ how adorable ought that Spirit to be to us?
 “ That mighty Spirit that can even of a sudden
 “ new create the World, make new Heavens, and
 “ a new Earth, diffuse its Light and Influence
 “ every where, cloath all with Lustre and Glory!
 “ And truly I believe we must be brought to have,
 “ higher Thoughts of the Spirit than we have
 “ before we see so good Days as we could wish we
 “ might. Alas! how diminishingly is it conceived
 “ and spoken of amongst us! We have the Name
 “ of the *Spirit*, or of the *Holy Ghost* many Times in
 “ our Mouths, when our Hearts ascribe not Honour to him: We glorify him not as God in
 “ our Conceptions: No, the Notions of our Minds
 “ and Dispositions of our Hearts are with many, as if we had not heard whether there be
 “ any Holy Ghost, or as if it signified a mere
 “ Nothing with us. But it concerns us to greaten
 “ our Thoughts concerning the Spirit of the living
 “ God, when it works as the Spirit of Nature, it
 “ renews the Face of the Earth, replenishes all
 “ the Region with Life. What would this Creation be, if all Divine Influence were retracted and

* Sermons on the prosperous State of the Christian Church.
 P. 282.

“ withheld, by which every Thing lives, and which
 “ is attributed to the Spirit of God as the active
 “ Principle that works every where in the Crea-
 “ tion of the World, moving upon the Abyfs in
 “ the Renewing of it from Time to Time? By
 “ him, and from him there is fuch a Thing as
 “ Life in all the Creation ; he works all in all.
 “ But confider it alfo as a Spirit of Holinefs, of
 “ Divine Life and Power in the Spirits of Men :
 “ What a mighty Agent is that, that can fpread
 “ fuch an Influence every where, unto the re-
 “ moteft Corners of this World ! and can reach
 “ every Heart of thofe that belong to God, and all
 “ at once ; and pierce into them with fo mighty
 “ Power, that though all the Art in the World
 “ cannot perfwade and change the Mind of a Man,
 “ even in a Matter of common Concernment, if
 “ he be refolved, yet this Spirit can transform
 “ where it touches, and overcome, if it will, even
 “ in the firft Attempt ! Oh ! What Homage fhould
 “ every Soul within us pay to this almighty Spirit !
 “ In how prostrate a Pofture fhould we be ! How
 “ fhould we adore that Spirit, that can, when it
 “ will, fill all and every where with Light, and
 “ Life ?”

5. If the Kingdom of Chrift fhall be a powerful,
 peaceable, univerfal, and everlafting Kingdom,
 let us make the Introduction of it the conftant Mat-
 ter of our Prayers, * *For ZION’S Sake we fhould not*
hold our Peace, and for JERUSALEM’S Sake we
fhould not be filent till the Righteoufnefs thereof go
forth as Brightnefs, and the Salvation thereof as a
Lamp that burns. And we fhould not give God any
Reft † till he has made JERUSALEM a great Habi-
tation. It is true, that we cannot by our Neglects
 of Prayer retard the Erection, nor by the Fer-

* Ifai. lxii. 2.

† Ifai. xxxiii. 20.

vency or Frequency of our Supplications, hasten the Approaches of this Kingdom. But yet God has commanded us to pray for this glorious Day, and whensoever it does come, it will come as an Answer to his Peoples Prayers, and we may be assured that the Cloud of Prayers which has been gathering for these many Ages at the Divine Throne, has not evaporated, but it only imbodyes, and stays there for a Time, to descend upon us at last in a wider and more plentiful Effusion of Blessings. Let us constantly pray therefore, for the Coming of this blessed Day, when Christ shall take the Reins of universal Dominion into his Hands. 'Tis a powerful Kingdom that shall be set up, and how much is this spiritual Power wanted, since without it the Ministers of Jesus Christ must labour in vain, and spend their Strength for nought, and must still from Month to Month, and Year to Year renew the same melancholy Complaint, * *Who hath believed our Report, and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed?* Again, it is a peaceable Kingdom that shall be established: And this Consideration should be a quickening Motive to our Requests, since the Earth is now a Scene of Confusion, Misery and Blood, since the Flames of War are spreading and consuming from one End of the Earth to the other, since the professing People of God are often divided by strong and unnatural Heart-burnings one from another, and since the Churches of Christ are torn and destroyed with fierce and outrageous Contentions. Farther, this Kingdom shall be an universal Kingdom, and this should be an inspiring Argument to our Petitions, for how devoutly is it to be wished that the Kingdom of Christ should not be scattered only here and there, and visit this and that narrow Province, but should extend itself over the widest

* Isai. liii. 1.

Regions of the World, and carry its Triumphs into POPISH, MAHOMETAN, and PAGAN Empires? And finally, the Kingdom that shall take Place in the World shall be everlasting. And should we not pray that it might have an early Beginning, and that, if it is consistent with the Wisdom, and Will of Heaven, that Throne might be raised which shall gather all Nations to it, and stand for ever? As you love your Fellow-creatures, Creatures that have an equal Worth and Immortality as to the Soul with yourselves, implore God to accomplish his Promises, and open the Eye-lids of that Day, which shall be stained with no Cloud, and which, though an heavy uncomfortable Night dwells before it, yet has no Night, nor Shadow of the Evening, to gather and darken behind it.

6. Let us examine if we are the Subjects of this Kingdom. This Kingdom is begun already in the Heart of every Saint, and though the Numbers of Saints are but few, and the Church of God is limited within very narrow Bounds, yet Christ has a Kingdom in the World, strictly speaking, though there should be not more than only one Saint in it. Are we then Subjects of this Kingdom, some of the scattered Drops before the abundant Shower when Christ shall have more than the Womb of the Morning for the Dew of Youth? Have we given up ourselves to Christ, made a free Surrender of ourselves to him as our Sovereign, because he has been our Saviour, are we ready to receive and obey his Commands, and do we sacrifice our Soul and Body to him, as his Conquest, and his Possession? And have we, in Consequence of this promised Allegiance to Christ, shewn that we are cast into the Mould of the Gospel? Do we seek Peace and pursue it? Are we not to be numbred amongst the fierce, incontinent, untractable, envious, implacable, revengeful Spirits, amongst the Betrayers of Friends, and the

the Haters of Enemies? Characters diametrically opposite to the Genius of the Gospel. Or are we meek, mild, forbearing, forgiving, and in all Respects endeavouring at least to be worthy Disciples of the Prince of Peace? In a Word, what are the Meditations of our Hearts, and the Fruits of our Lips and Lives? What are our Designs, Studies, and Inclinations? Are they to love and practise Sin, and support its Kingdom in the World, or are they to promote, and establish Holiness? And are we going on * *to cleanse ourselves from all the Pollutions of Flesh and Spirit, and perfect Holiness in the Fear of God?* Does one Year pass off and find us as carnal, worldly, foolish, negligent, and in all Respects as sensual as the former? Or do we, in a daily Dependence upon the Spirit of God, more and more refine from the Impurities of Sin, and more clearly shew, as you know fair untroubled Streams reflect the Face of the Sun, the Image of our heavenly Father? Without Holiness, universal Holiness, as to Design and Endeavour, in vain do we flatter ourselves that we are the true Subjects of this spiritual Kingdom.

7. Though the People of God may not live to see the Day, when this wide-extended Kingdom of Christ shall be set up in the World, yet it shall go well with them. It may be, and it is not very unlikely that so it should happen, that we may not live to see the utter Extirpation of ANTICHRISTIAN and PAGAN Idolatries, Superstitions, Ignorance and Tyranny, and the Throne of Christ built upon their Ruins; but yet, though we may have the Sorrow to see Contention and Wickedness fill the World all our Days, and though we may lay down our Heads, and be covered with the
Dust

* 2 Cor. vii. 1.

Dust of Death before this holy and happy Period arrives, it shall go well with us if we are the true Saints of God, and Friends of the Bridegroom. God will not leave his People comfortless, he will watch over, and refresh them while in a barren and hostile Land, and when Death comes, they shall be conveyed into the Regions of everlasting Purity, Peace and Joy, and dwell in the Visions of that Face, and in the Enjoyment of that Love which diffuse infinite and eternal Felicity and Glory through all the Myriads of blessed Spirits around the Throne. If Saints live not to see Christ's Kingdom come upon Earth, they shall go up to his Kingdom in Heaven: And his Kingdom in Heaven is the Pattern of his Kingdom on Earth, * *Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.*

8. And lastly, Hence the People of God may draw Consolations for themselves in Life, and in a dying Hour. The Enemies of God may for a Time prevail, and threaten to swallow up the small Remnant of the People of God in immediate and final Ruin; but yet a Believer may rest assured, that God will not suffer his Promise concerning the future Kingdom of our Lord to fail; and God having spoke this faithful Word in my Text, the Saint may leave it safely and chearfully in his Hands to accomplish it. Let these Considerations therefore be the Cordials we always carry about with us in these evil Days, and let us revive ourselves with this Thought, that tho' bad are the present Times, better are at the Door. And methinks it will soften a Believer's dying Pillow, and cheer the expiring Pangs of Nature, to remember that, though he may leave the Church of Christ low and afflicted and persecuted by

* Matt. vi. 10.

by outrageous and subtle Enemies, yet he has the strongest Ground to say with *Jacob* in a like Case,
 * *Behold, I die ; but God shall be with you ;* and fulfill his Promise *that in the Days of these Kings, the God of Heaven shall set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed ; and the Kingdom shall not be left to other People, but it shall break in Pieces, and consume all these Kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*

* Gen. xlviii. 21.

F I N I S.





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